

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) The supporting device of claim 18, as claimed in claim 13, wherein said the head support section and said the back support section are separate structural parts which are fitted to each other.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) The supporting device of claim 18, as claimed in claim 3, wherein said areas the recesses can be closed by detachably or movably arranged respective cover elements.

5. (Currently Amended) The supporting device of claim 18, as claimed in claim 13, wherein said the back support section and said the head support section are integrated in a rigid support unit.

6. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) The supporting device of as claimed in claim 5, wherein said the rigid support unit is arranged to be movable between a vertical rest position and a horizontal supporting position.

7. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) The supporting device of as claimed in claim 6, wherein said the head support section and said the back support section are mounted relative

to one another so as to be able to be moved between the rest position and the supporting position by guide means.

8. (Currently Amended) A home or workplace furniture item or leisure item, wherein a supporting device as claimed in claim 18 ~~Claim 13~~ is provided.

9. (Withdrawn) The home or workplace furniture item or leisure item as claimed in claim 8, configured as a seat and/or couch.

10. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) An add-on unit with a head support section and a spacer part and with at least one connection element for securing the add-on unit to a surface part, the spacer part being configured as a support surface for a spinal column area, and the securing being done such that the surface part as back support section serves for the overall creation of a supporting device as claimed in ~~Claim 13~~ claim 18.

11.-17. (Cancelled)

18. (New) A longitudinally elongate supporting device for a person's back and head area, said device comprising:

 a head support section; and
 a back support section, said back support section defining a first support surface disposed at the level of shoulder blade areas of a person, and a second support surface, said first support surface being disposed between said head support section and said second support surface, said first and second support surfaces each having a width dimension defined transversely relative to a longitudinal central axis of said supporting device and said second support surface having a longitudinal dimension defined parallel to

the central longitudinal axis of said supporting device, said first support surface defining a pair of areas which open sidewardly outwardly on opposite sides of said back support section for receiving the respective shoulder blade areas of the person, each said area having an innermost edge defined by an outer longitudinal edge of said first support surface and located adjacent the central longitudinal axis, said width dimension of said first support surface being defined transversely between said innermost edges of said areas and being significantly less than said width dimension of said second support surface, said width dimension of said first support surface being sufficiently narrow so that said first support surface supports only a spinal column region of the person and to permit the respective shoulder blade areas of the person to move downwardly below said first support surface without meeting any resistance from said supporting device, said longitudinal dimension and said width dimension of said second support surface being of a dimension sufficient for fully supporting the person's thoracic region, said areas each having a maximum width dimension extending transversely between the respective said innermost edge to an outer extent in longitudinal alignment with an outer longitudinal edge of said second support surface, said width dimension of each said area being greater than said width dimension of said first support surface.

19. (New) The device of claim 18, wherein said head support section has a width dimension defined transversely relative to the longitudinal central axis of said supporting device, said width dimension of said head support section being greater than said width dimension of said first support surface.

20. (New) The device of claim 18, wherein each said area has a length dimension extending longitudinally between said head support section and said second support surface, said width dimension of each said area being greater than said length dimension of said area.

21. (New) A method of stretching the chest muscles by using a longitudinally elongate supporting device, said method comprising:

providing a longitudinally elongate supporting device including a head support section and a back support section, said back support section defining a first support surface disposed at the level of shoulder blade areas of a person, and a second support surface, said first support surface being disposed between said head support section and said second support surface, said first and second support surfaces each having a width dimension defined transversely relative to a longitudinal central axis of said supporting device and said second support surface having a longitudinal dimension defined parallel to the central longitudinal axis of said supporting device, said first support surface defining a pair of areas which open sidewardly outwardly on opposite sides of said back support section for receiving the respective shoulder blade areas of the person, each said area having an innermost edge defined by an outer longitudinal edge of said first support surface and located adjacent the central longitudinal axis, said width dimension of said first support surface being defined transversely between said innermost edges of said areas and being significantly less than said width dimension of said second support surface, said width dimension of said first support surface being sufficiently narrow so that said first support surface supports only a spinal column region of the person and to permit the respective shoulder blade areas of the person to move downwardly below said first support

surface without meeting any resistance from said supporting device, said longitudinal dimension and said width dimension of said second support surface being of a dimension sufficient for fully supporting the person's thoracic region, said areas each having a maximum width dimension extending transversely between the respective said innermost edge to an outer extent in longitudinal alignment with an outer longitudinal edge of said second support surface, said width dimension of each said area being greater than said width dimension of said first support surface;

lying on said supporting device with the back positioned in direct supportive engagement with said supporting device;

positioning the head on said head support section;

positioning the back on said back support section with the spinal column region on said first support surface of said back support section, the thoracic region on said second support surface of said back support section, and the shoulder blade areas over the respective said areas such that the shoulder blade areas do not meet any resistance from said supporting device when the arms are extended sidewardly and then moved downwardly; and

performing a stretching exercise by extending the arms horizontally sidewardly with the palms facing upward, and then allowing the arms to move downwardly under their inherent weight so as to move the shoulder blade areas downwardly into the respective areas, thereby stretching the chest muscles.

22. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein said step of providing said supporting device comprises providing said head support section with a width dimension defined transversely relative to the longitudinal central axis of said supporting device, said width dimension of said head support section being greater than said width dimension of said first support surface.

23. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein said step of providing said supporting device comprises providing each said area with a length dimension extending longitudinally between said head support section and said second support surface, said width dimension of each said area being greater than said length dimension of said area.